INTERVIEW WITH GORDON NIGHTINGALE
BY THOMAS GOETTEL, NOVEMBER 21, 2000

MR. GOETTEL: It's November 21, 2000, we are in the home of Gordon Nightingale, who is a legendary Refuge Manager in the Fish and Wildlife Service. We are in Marshfield, Massachusetts. Also present is Tommy Stubbs, who was the Maintenance Foreman at Parker River for over forty years. Gordon, would you tell us a bit about how you got into the Fish and Wildlife Service, and your background, please?

MR. NIGHTINGALE: I started work with the State of Massachusetts, as a Conservation Skilled Helper on the Beartown State Forest. That is were I met my wife. I took the job at $4.77 a day, with the understanding that I would get the first vacancy in the Fish and Game Department.

MR. GOETTEL: What year was that?

MR. NIGHTINGALE: That was in 1944. In the fall of 1944, I was fortunate that there was vacancy at the Phillips Wildlife Lab in Uptown. It was the State Wildlife Research Laboratory. I was assigned to the waterfowl project. I worked there for seven years, and during that time I got on Civil Service, and became Project Leader, in the Pittman-Robinson Waterfowl Management and Research Projects. There were several projects. At that time, Parker River had been established, but there was an Act that was introduced and passed by both Houses to totally abolish the Refuge. This legislation was vetoed by President Truman. I got the job as Manager because both the State and the Federal government, through the Pittman-Robinson Federal Aide contacts, trusted me. The bulk of the Parker River Refuge was later taken away by legislation. The land was returned to the public if they wanted it back. But the bulk of it stayed in Federal ownership, though not as a Refuge. Later it was given to the State as a public hunting area; the Downfall Area. I left a permanent Civil Service position with the State to accept a temporary appointment as Refuge Manager at the Parker River Refuge. Four or five years later I was converted to permanent by an executive order by President Eisenhower. When I arrived at Parker River there was a billboard on the only road out to Plum Island and the Refuge. In effect, the billboard said that all were welcome except for the Fish and Wildlife Service. My wife and I found places to rent that suddenly became unavailable when the landlord learned that I worked for the Fish and Wildlife Service. We finally wound up in a "spite" house that was built as part of a divorce settlement. It had no fresh water. During storms it was completely surrounded by tides.

MR. GOETTEL: Was it right on Plum Island?

MR. NIGHTINGALE: This was on the road out to Plum Island, on the right. Several years later we moved in the former U. S. Coast Guard Lighthouse Keepers residence that

had been transferred to the Fish and Wildlife Service. This was the same land where the Service building was later constructed. I went there as a GS-7, and I am one of the few people who was ever promoted from GS-7 to GS-8. That was the outcome of dragging my feet on a suggested transfer. I was sent there to try and manage the Refuge, but mainly to get on top of public relations.

MR. GOETTEL: So you were a GS-7 Refuge Manager?

MR. NIGHTINGALE: Oh yeah. That was the second highest one in the Region. Moosehorn was an eleven. I can remember my peers when we would have meetings, and they would wonder, "Who is this kid from outside? I have worked for fourteen years, and I'm not a seven yet." There are "professionals." I was similarly transferred from Moosehorn to Bombay Hook, after the State of Delaware and the Delaware Wildlife Federation had requested that the Fish and Wildlife Service remove the current Manager. I was charged by Regional Director Gottschalk to get on top of public relations, and he didn't care if I did anything else. I was also instructed not to engage in any law enforcement off of the Refuge accept in the assistance of a Game Management Agent. I guess I was successful. I received the Delaware Wildlife Federation and National Wildlife Federation award of the Wildlife Conservationist, in 1996, and incidentally received the Meritorious Award of the Department of the Interior in 1984.

MR. GOETTEL: What year did you go to Bombay Hook?

MR. NIGHTINGALE: I will give you the itinerary of my career with the Fish and Wildlife Service. My memory is short, so I have had to write it up on a piece of paper. I started as Refuge Manager in charge of Parker River and Great Meadows National Wildlife Refuge in January of 1951, and left in August of 1959. My starting pay at GS-7 was $3,825.00 a year. I get more than that now each month on my retirement. I went to Moosehorn in 1959, and left in 1961. I went to Bombay Hook and Prime Hook in 1961 until 1967. I was the Regional Biologist in Boston from 1967 to 1971. I was Assistant Regional Supervisor for Planning in New Mexico, Region 2, from 1971 until 1972. I was Assistant Regional Supervisor for Operations in Region 2 from 1972 to 1973. I then went to Washington as Chief of Systems. That was the old PPBE, from June of 1973 to October of 1973. That's when the Directorate made the under-the-counter decision to break the backs of the Divisions. The Divisions were largely self-contained at that time. The Director maintained control, but they made all of the operations decisions, or most of them. I went to the branch of Programming, which is budgets for Refuges from October of 1973 to March of 1974. But the budget had been taken out of Refuge's hands so it was a job of providing information to the program managers. Then I went as I&R Program Coordinator. I was given a choice of a couple of them, but I took that because Wildlife didn't talk, and I thought people did. I was there from 1974 to 1977. Then I went into Washington D.C. as a Coordinator. Lynn Greenwalt asked me to take over a difficult job where people were fighting amongst each other to try and come up with a

program management document. I was there from 1977 to 1979, and I got the document. Shortly afterward I came up to the Boston Regional office in 1979 as Assistant Regional Director for Federal Assistance and Endangered Species. In 1982, I became Assistant Regional Director for Habitat Preservation. I was there until August of 1984 when I left.

Throughout my career, I have enjoyed being constructive, rather than obstructive. In Refuges you are trying to get something done, as a rule. You are trying to increase populations, and make it better for the public. But in law enforcement, you are trying to catch somebody doing something wrong. I have done a lot of it, but I didn't really enjoy it that much. Habitat preservation was a little frustrating because some of the Field Supervisors bragged that this was the fourth time that they had saved these three acres of marsh. We were having a big fight with the Corp of Engineers, and a lot of the things were very valid. But the Regional Director was limited to how many hot potatoes he could logically pass upstairs to Washington. And Washington was limited to how many they could handle. We tried to pick those that were of some significance. They used to joke with me, when I was Acting Regional Director one day, and I signed an requisition request and it turned out that it was for a Casino's reflecting pool that was reputedly tied to the Mafia. They joked that my days were numbered. Nothing ever came of it. Of all of the work that I have done, I enjoyed Refuges the most, and Federal Aid was perhaps the next. It's gratifying to be able to have millions of dollars to pass out to people. You just have to make sure that they adhere to the regulations. When I was in Federal Aid, there was a policy; not really a rule that if you were going to use land for a match you had twenty-five percent State, and seventy-five percent Federal. If you were going to use the value of the land to match the Federal dollars, you had to use marshland. It was a marshland project. I talked long and loud, with the premise being that we were all in wildlife conservation to encourage the States to have a single project so that Fish and Game land, anywhere in the State could be pledged as the match to the Federal money. It worked out very well because there were many of the States that were about to loose their money. I think it was three years, and then it re-reverted. This way it opened up a big land bank that they could use. It also had the advantage that once it went into Federal Aid, it couldn't be diverted for a prison or roads unless the Federal Aid money was reimbursed. It safeguarded a lot of land, and I did enjoy that.

MR. GOETTEL: Are you from Marshfield originally?

MR. NIGHTINGALE: Oh no. I was born in Wisconsin and lived anywhere from Maine to Florida. I went to five schools in one year. I never got past the sophomore year of College. I attempted to go back, but I would get a promotion, so I thought, "Why go back?" I would file for Civil Service and they would tell me I wasn't qualified. But within the year I would be that, or more. So I did something right.

MR. GOETTEL: Were you in the Service?

MR. NIGHTINGALE: No. That's the main reason I left the State. Because I took a slight cut in pay to take a temporary job with the Federal government. The State of Massachusetts had absolute Veterans preference. If you got a one hundred on the exam, and a veteran got a sixty-one, you went to the bottom of the list. I didn't mind ten points or so with the Federal government.

The first meeting I attended as a representative of the Fish and Wildlife Service was the old Black Duck Committee, back in 1950. It met in Maryland. It sticks in my mind for two reasons; one was that the people on that committee were very wealthy. They ate at a hotel in Maryland. I don't know what I had, but it was the cheapest thing on the menu. And they had drinks, and I didn't have any. When the time came, they divided the check. My per diem was $7.50 a day and I think the check was something like $35.00. The other thing was that they went on and on about how they needed more banding and better breeding ground surveys, harvest statistics and everything and anything. I had the temerity to say, "Well, at any one time, what is the limiting factor that controls the population of the eastern coastal Black Duck?" Everybody looked at me, and went on as though I hadn't said anything. I regret to say that through the thirty or forty years that I was associated with it, nobody has ever really attacked it from the basic questions, and still haven't as far as I know. Another thing that I came away with is that; I don't know if you are familiar with the work of Joseph Hager, the former State Ornithologist. But he spent a lifetime on two things, the Peregrine Falcon and the Black Duck. He took and maintained meticulous records on thousand and thousands of bandings, by hand. He had a theory that the Black Ducks were largely controlled, at that time at least, by the limitations on the wintering habitat. (The ducks that wintered this far north.) The ducks moved down an estuary during a prolonged hard freeze. There is no inland wintering habitat. Those that were furthest up the estuary, that were first pushed down, were in the poorest shape when it really got critical. The critical habitat, clam flats and muscle beds and so forth that are exposed at low tide, and that ducks can get to, at least until a sheet of ice forms on them. That's where a lot of our habitat is being destroyed. They are ripping out the muscle beds and so forth. I spent a lot of time when I was with the State collecting birds, and getting breast profiles and so forth. There were a substantial number of birds that died. A lot of them were very weakened. As the State Regional Biologist, one of my jobs was to work on the Flyway Habitat Unit Project "FHUP." It was anchored by Dale Sutherland, a Biologist in Refuges in the Central office. Each Region had a representative. In essence, what you did was that you conferred with the States, and drew up maps of approximate acreages, estimated carrying capacity for various seasons of the year knowing that it was very rough, and the lands ability to support hunting. What it boiled down to was that during the fall, except for a few days, there was plenty of hunting, and plenty of room for all of the ducks that we could ever foresee having. The critical periods were in the winter and spring. But Washington didn't like that, so that sort of folded up. Granted, it was empirical but I've got copies of reports about that thick just for Massachusetts.

MR. GOETTEL: Why didn't Washington like it?

MR. NIGHTINGALE: They didn't want to hear that there was plenty of room. We didn't need to preserve fall habitat particularly, and that's mostly what Refuges did. Of course, at that time, Refuges were almost totally waterfowl oriented. Some of them had shorebirds. I know that when I got down to Bombay Hook I got short shrift when I wanted to put some of the fields at Prime Hook… We got Prime Hook to preserve habitat, and to stop it from being industrialized and polluted. Everybody agreed that we really didn't need it as a Refuge. The immediate plans were to open it to hunting and so forth. But the management plan that I drew up was that we'd have almost no farmland. We didn't need it. At that time we had geese coming out of our ears. We had short stopped all of the geese from going down to the Carolinas and Maryland and Delaware. We had more geese than we could use. The waterfowl types got in there, and they cleared land and farmed it and they succeeded in building up a problem goose population. Even up at Bombay Hook, I planted hedgerows through the middles of the fields to make them less attractive to geese, and to get some other bird species in there. We planted Alesspidies [sic, a type of plant] and this and that and the other in parts of it. We tried to lay some field's fallow. We had a pretty good population of Bobolink and Meadowlark started. But after I left they put it back into maximum production again.

MR. STUBBS: We used to feed the Black Ducks with emergency feeding.

MR. NIGHTINGALE: That's another thing. Hager's theory was that one of the advantages of banding Black Ducks is that they become acclimated to eating corn. I know that down a Stage Harbor, we had a spring that is gone. It was where the Stage Island dike is. There used to be a spring right near the base of it. The ducks would come up there and tipple to get fresh water when it was cold. It got so that they would build themselves something like an anthill.

MR. STUBBS: Some of them would be this high, wouldn't they? The water would drip off of their feathers, and it would freeze and look like a funnel.

MR. NIGHTINGALE: Yeah. And would actually take their feet off of the ground reaching, trying to get water out of the bottom. What made me think of it was that we spread corn out there. And we weren't banding at that time. The ducks would sit on it. It was a nice dry place. They didn't eat it. Hager and his group, the Essex County Federation of Sportsmen's Clubs, or something or other, had a deal with some popcorn makers. They got all of the "old maids" [corn that didn't pop]. Warren Farthingham used to run the airport. He would fly up in a Piper Cub or something, and have a door off. He had bags of the stuff and would tip them over and hold them by the bottom of the bag, and strew the corn out.

MR. GOETTEL: But the ducks wouldn't eat it?

MR. NIGHTINGALE: Well, this was back when the State was doing a lot of banding, so the ducks were acclimated to it.

MR. STUBBS: Ed Addie was doing a lot of banding then.

MR. NIGHTINGALE: We banded and banded and they were all showing the same things. I ran sex and age studies when I was with the State, which showed; I don't know what affect it has, but most of your kill comes takes place in the first flush of hunting. The sex and age study showed first of all that the preponderance of birds that were taken during inland marsh hunting, or salt marsh were almost all female and young birds. Even out on the harbor, along the edge, they were females and young. It wasn't until late in the season that the males appeared; the old males. And they weren't harvested much accept by the float hunters who actually sculled out and snuck up on the flocks.

MR. STUBBS: They were called "Red Legs" which we thought was a separate species.

MR. NIGHTINGALE: Yeah, for a while.

MR. STUBBS: Some of the people up there still do call them Red Legs. They think that they are a different species.

MR. GOETTEL: To me, a Red Leg was a Canadian bird.

MR. STUBBS: It's an adult bird, isn't it?

MR. GOETTEL: It's an adult bird.

MR. NIGHTINGALE: Yeah, that's all it is. It is an adult male. If you keep them in a pen, you can see them go through the color phases.

MR. STUBBS: How about the time we took Carbon Tetrachloride and sprayed the corn?

MR. NIGHTINGALE: I don't want to talk about that. [Tongue in cheek] We stored corn in bins. We had weevils and everything else in it.

MR. STUBBS: Why did we store the corn?

MR. NIGHTINGALE: For banding and for emergency feeding. It would get weevilly and whatnot, so I lined the bins with tin. We took Indian backpack pumps and bought Carbon Tetrachloride from a store stock catalog in five-gallon cans. We'd pour it in the pumps and go in the bins and spray. We'd hold our breath as long as we could and came out. It's a wonder we've got any kidneys left at all!

MR. STUBBS: It was strong!

MR. NIGHTINGALE: I tried to get out of it, but Art Miller the Regional Refuge Supervisor wanted to establish a resident goose population at Parker River. We built pens, and got geese out there.

MR. STUBBS: I showed Tom a picture OF the pens that we built to bring them up from down south. We got Mallards too.

MR. NIGHTINGALE: Yeah, and Bald Pate. We'd bring anything up that was available. We had a lot of rats there and since we were talking about poison; we had the old fashioned pump, like a huge bicycle pump. But you put in Cyanide and you'd pump that in. It would hit the moist soil and it would dust and let out the fumes. It's a wonder we didn't kill ourselves there! It was ignorance I guess, but we had pretty good control, in fact we had control of phragmites in the pools. It later took over. We had a patrol during the summer season. We'd go in with Urabor [sic?] a soil sterilent, with a duster. You'd go in there and dust it and it would kill that particular thing. You had to go out far and get the runners. We kept ahead of it. There has been some criticism of the introduction of Japanese Black Pine on Plum Island. I am responsible. They wanted us to farm some of the low dunes up against the impoundments. So we disked and disked, but there was a bunch of junk so on a calm day we touched a match to it. All of a sudden the wind picked up and the fire jumped road and went right out to the ocean. All of that false heather, and everything burned. There wasn't any marsh grass. It was just bare sand. So I hurried up and got a bunch of Japanese Pine from the SCS, and we put those in, and they have been too successful.

MR. STUBBS: Yep.

MR. NIGHTINGALE: One of the most vivid sights that I still have in my mind is going down through that area. I was down there with my wife and we had on snowshoes. We had had a heavy snow for the coast. And there wasn't a track [animal] around or anything. We went over to The Knobs, a little clump of woods there and right in front of us, the snow just erupted. Six or seven deer were under the snow. There wasn't a sign of them, or any tracks. They just erupted and ran off. Your heart came right up in your throat, but it was a beautiful sight. The pine trees, and the snow flying and the deer; and the deer were bone dry. There was no dampness or anything. They were nice, and it was a beautiful spot.

MR. GOETTEL: Let me ask you about feeding the Black Ducks in the wintertime. Why did you do that?

MR. NIGHTINGALE: We were trying to save them. They would get a knife keel. They just didn't have feed. One thing is, that even when there were some muscle beds there, as the tide went out, the ducks would all be in a maybe ten or twenty foot strip. As the tide went out, a glaze of ice would form so they couldn't get the muscle. Of course muscles are sort of hard for Black Ducks to get to dislodge. They had necrosis of the esophagus, which is a symptom of a Vitamin A deficiency, which corn is rich in. As I remember, we didn't run lead tests on those. But we collected some birds that were still in good shape. I tried to devise a measurement by taking the length of the keel, in a straight line, and a distance to the bones outer surface to try to determine how much was flesh and how much was hair. It never really got quite worked out, but it was very apparent that the birds, which could still fly that you shot, had far more breast, contour that those that didn't. And it was amazing too; I used my Lab [dog] down there. It would be ten below, and he would get wet and icicles would form on his whiskers. He would whine, and I would break them off. You would go along, say at eight o'clock in the morning after the sun had been up a little bit, and the birds were up in the bushes, up in the rack line. One would flap out to the water, but he could catch it. Some of them I put back, and would make him leave them. You'd come back at twelve o'clock that bird would still be there, but when you approached it, it would fly. So actually their body temperature was down. That's what I assume. We never took the temperatures, but the difference between you when you're almost ready to die, and when you are warmed up.

MR. GOETTEL: Did you feed them routinely?

MR NIGHTINGALE: Oh no.

MR. GOETTEL: It was just when it was really cold temperatures?

MR. NIGHTINGALE: And it wasn't just cold temperatures. It was when the estuary froze. You can talk to natives, or duck hunters that are around, and they can point out the spots where every last duck will be when things really get tough. At Ipswich, it was Great Neck or Little Neck. But there was a great big muscle flat that went out there. And also a little bit over by Grape Island, but not as much. At Newburyport Harbor, it was at the Hump Sands. It used to be all clam and muscle flats. I don't know what it is now. When it is warm, the ducks are all over the flats, everywhere.

MR. STUBBS: They would go to Stage Island Creek too, in back of Grape Island. But we don't have the Black Ducks that we used to have, nowheres near.

MR. NIGHTINGALE: Of course, I don't know how much Massachusetts added to the Black Duck population but as a youngster, every little pond, beaver flowage or brook had a brood of Black ducks. As youngsters, we knew where we could go and would sneak up on a pond and bushwhack Black Duck, and Wood Ducks. We didn't get many but if you take all of those dribble and add them up… Ed Addie who was the Regional Flyway

Biologist for the Atlantic flyway for years spent years up in Canada trying to count birds and get indices. The breeding population was so scarce that it was impractical to work out an index, even in Labrador, and New Brunswick and Newfoundland. Speaking of counting; Parker River Refuge is not all that typical, but to go down today and count birds there, you are wasting your time. If you go down on a high run of tides, you can do a pretty fair job. Or, if a boat goes down through and flushed them up, you know that there are at least that many. But the only way to really count them is from the air. Having been Regional Biologist in Region 5 and Biologist in Washington, I had occasion to go through narratives and things. I had some girls working on it. A Manager works at a Refuge for a while, and through good management he achieves an all time high of waterfowl population. He has ups and down, but does well. A new Manager comes in and says, "Whoa, I don't know what happened, if the counts are off, or if the birds are down?"

MR. STUBBS: Or the Manager is exaggerating.

MR. NIGHTINGALE: But the next year, it goes up a little. And he stays there four or five years, and gets a new all time high. You can almost plot it against how long the Manager has been there. Most of the time, when a Manager leaves, it drops and goes back up. One of the things that I used to enjoy was net trapping geese at Bombay Hook. That was quite a thrill. You'd get one hundred or two hundred geese at a time, on your net. It was a lot of work. I used to enjoy that.

MR. GOETTEL: You must have been Regional Biologist before Bill Bradstein, right? Bill must have come after you in Boston.

MR. NIGHTINGALE: Yeah. At Parker River at one time we were farming and doing this and that and the other. We had ninety plus percent of all the game ducks in New England at Parker River. And that didn't set too well. That's one of the reasons we cut back on "hot" crops and started with wheat and so forth. At Bombay Hook I worked on the lead poisoning of geese. I've got some of the publications here. When I first went there the geese were plentiful, but they got more and more and more. We did better with our corn, and left it there. During the daylight hours when it was legal to hunt, most of the geese were on the Refuge. So we started to cut back on the corn. Every winter we had lead poisoning of geese. You could drive around the Refuge about an hour or so before dark and listen to the geese and their high-pitched honks. You would count those, and the next morning you'd have at least that many dead geese at just about the spots that those honks were coming from. They all had the symptoms of lead poisoning. We used to draw down the pools, and have no trouble with botulism. Now they are having trouble with botulism. They don't dare draw down the pools. We had Eliochrios [sic] in Raven's pool like a lawn. The birds would get in there and just go crazy. When I was at Bombay Hook, I rebuilt all of roads and dikes and put in new control structures. We didn't put them in; they were put in under contract. One of the memories that I have

etched in my mind is that at my wife and our two boys and I were driving around the Refuge at night, it was maybe eight or nine o'clock. A Woodcock stepped out in the road, which is not that unusual. He would take two or three steps forward, and two back, and keep repeating this motion.

MR. STUBBS: I've seen that too.

MR. NIGHTINGALE: It was a fancy little dance. His head was going the whole time. Of course it was always fun to go out with a blanket and wait for them to fly up and see how close that you could get.

MR. STUBBS: I've seen that on the Stackyard Road. Keith Walton and his wife, and Pat and I were there. We stopped, and this bird came out and we were very close and he did that same dance. Keith always tried to imitate it in front of his wife to see if she would react. But I had never seen that before.

MR. NIGHTINGALE: At Parker River, the whole family used to enjoy going down to the beach during or just after a storm. We saw flotsam and jetsam, but we would pick up scads of money. We would find watches and sometimes a ring. The sand would blow and bottle caps and little pieces of glass and money would stand right up on top of a little tee [like a golf tee]. Tommy picked up some silver dollars once down there.

MR. STUBBS: I used to go out there after every storm. It was just like these little things were sitting on a tee.

MR. NIGHTINGALE: Out in Region 2, one of the family things we used to enjoy was going out. My wife would have the pickup all packed, and on Friday afternoon after work, we'd take off for the weekend. One of the places we used to go was on one of the Indian Reservations. There was a small canyon that had been cut by storm waters through volcanic "tuff"; I guess you'd call it. But mixed in with it was obsidian "tears". We would go up there and pick up what they called "Apache tears". I've got jars of it down [here].

MR. STUBBS: What is it?

MR. NIGHTINGALE: Black glass. But it is formed by volcanic action. I remember one time, we approached and there was a party ahead of us picking them up. I looked at this woman, and she had a bare back. I got up there and asked her if she had had any luck. She got up on her knees and said, "Yeah, I've got some good ones." She was bare breasted.

MR. STUBBS: She was? [Surprised]

MR. NIGHTINGALE: Yeah, and she had some good ones! [Laughing] My wife said, "You dirty old man!" One of the things that my wife had difficulty with, when we moved was that she was used to Delaware. When we going here or there, the State map is that long and that wide, and from here to there is six miles. We got out to Albuquerque and we were going to visit some friends. She looked at the map and said, "Oh, we'll be there in fifteen minutes." An hour and a half later, we were still on the road. The scale is so much different. I greatly enjoyed, I don't know why; I guess I don't rile people particularly, but I've served on more evaluation teams than you can shake a stick at. I've got a whole drawer full on the ones that I worked on. The one that I enjoyed the most was the national one where we went to every Region. The Regions were fine, but Alaska was fabulous. We took the "Grumman goose" and went from Valdez to Prudhoe Bay. We landed at the work camps, and the food was fabulous. I am prone to motion sickness so I loaded up with Dramamine. Of course they said absolutely don't drink so I didn't. I'd get off of the plane, and one guy would get up beside me and would guide me off because me knees were just [shaky] but I wasn't sick. That exact same plane, about a year later was flying waterfowl censuses offshore and was lost, with all hands. I remember that we flew along the edge of a seabird colony. It was big rocky cliffs. The pilot told us to brace ourselves. When we got to the end, we were going to make a sharp left turn. We came out, and we were in the lea and there must have been a forty or fifty mile an hour wind blowing around the end. We got there and you could feel the place go to the side, and he turned it and we went right along. We also flew over some Musk Ox. They heard the plane and they formed the traditional [defensive] circle. We went to Bethel. Today seems to be a day for funnels. But there were dogs on chains and they had dragged all of their frozen droppings up around the stakes so that there was a sort of funnel. There was a gooey, crappy ditch and they had batter boards to walk on. Everything was flown in. Out in back of the Post Office there were all of these huge cartons used for shipping, covered with postage stamps. My inclination was to stop and rip them all off. There were a lot of old cars. They had about three miles of road, maybe ten. If a car would break down, they would push it off for a breakwater. The whole waterfront was old cars. The "hotel" we stayed in had a sign up straddled the middle of the hall. It covered a place where the floor had rotted out. You had to put your feet up close against the wall to walk around it. I think it was $1.50 for a Coke. Of course that was when it was fifteen cents for one in the States. The saying was that if the Lord were going to give the Earth an enema, he would put it in Bethel!

MR. GOETTEL: You said you were doing an evaluation of all of the Regions. Was that just Refuges?

MR. NIGHTINGALE: It was programmatic. Everything. When I was Operations Assistant Supervisor in Region 2, I went down to Anahuac Refuge where they had some cages of Red Wolves. We were looking at their management and costs and so forth. We went out with marsh buggies that had great big wheels. We took .22 automatic rifles shooting Nutria to feed the Red Wolves. It was a lot of fun. But I got to figuring out that

they could have feed those wolves T-bone steak for the price of the crews of men going out shooting Nutria. And Region 2, when I went out there, the Refuges were run like ranches, I think. I remembered checking the impress cash. There wasn't a Refuge that I went to where I didn't say, "Well, this doesn't look quite right. I think we'd better break for lunch." I would come back, and it would balance. In fact, sometimes it would have extra. [All laughing] Parker River put the goose pens and ponds and the Stage Harbor dike, which was a "no-no", but I couldn't stop Tom, he just kept going.

MR. STUBBS: We had no permits. We had nothing!

MR. NIGHTINGALE: Nobody knew we were doing it.

MR. STUBBS: Only the Regional Supervisor.

MR. NIGHTINGALE: Yeah. Shortly after I got in the Service, I formed a philosophy of performance standards, for me. One is to keep the boss out of trouble. The second was to make him look good. And the third was to do my job. That worked out very well.

MR. STUBBS: When we put that dike in; that's the one that I was telling you about where I took a regular carpenter's level and drove a stake in, and sighted down the level to find out where we were, out on the marsh.

MR. NIGHTINGALE: I have never been a mechanically inclined person. Tom, when he gets on a dragline or a bulldozer and it becomes part of him. They got me in an airboat at Bombay Hook in a pond that was being drawn down. Instead of "geed," I "hawed", and instead of slowing down, I sped up. I drove it up on a mudflat. And I had to take off my uniform and carry it on my head. Everybody took pictures. They got on the radio and called the Staff. Every body came out. I was wadding up to my crotch in the mud.

MR. STUBBS: Come to think of it, you were always doing that! We've a picture of you at Great Meadows in your…

MR. NIGHTINGALE: Oh now, that was a flood!

MR. STUPPS: He would take his pants off, just like that!

MR. NIGHTINGALE: Another thing that I learned at Bombay Hook; you think a flood is coming, so it's doing to inundate your dikes from the outside, in. So you open up the control structures to equal out the pressure. Well, the controls structures aren't designed to in-take water, or most of them aren't. The water was washing them out so I had to close them. The one dike that the water came over, there was a good wave action and it broke up the grass, and caught on top of the dike, about that high of solid grass. The water seeped through it. It didn't really wash the dike. And literally thousands of

Muskrats were on those dikes. I remember Dick Rigby and I was going down through checking the dikes, and there were ruts [in the road]. There was a Muskrat in the rut, and he said that he would get out, and chase it out of the rut so we wouldn't crush it. The Muskrats changed their demeanor totally. They became very aggressive. They were fighting each other, although there would be clumps of Muskrats that big. They would be bunched up together on a floating island. Those that were on land changed their demeanor. I have to admit that I drove over a few of them. I don't know if they are still doing it, but we tried to get ducks to nest on the dikes at Bombay Hook. It turns out that the dikes were almost a death trap for the nesting. We mowed them, and we may not have had as many nests. But at least the ones that were there were more successful. The ones that were successful were scattered out on the marsh.

MR. STUBBS: Were there predators on the dikes?

MR. NIGHTINGALE: Yeah. There were coons and stuff.

MR. GOETTEL: Did you do any Strychnine poisoning of coons and foxes or anything like that? I know that they did some of that down at Brigantine.

MR. NIGHTINGALE: I don't know what year that was. But they did Strychnine out at Parker River before I got there, and all hell broke loose. They had trouble with the public. I went to Parker River and when they had storms, we lost our power very frequently. The power lines may not have been as good as they are now. One time, our furnace was bad, and the furnace quit. Then the power went out and we had an electrician. Then the storm came so bad that it cut off the island. So it was Tommy Stubbs, two electricians, and two plumbers, and myself. And they didn't have anyplace to go, so I called up my wife. She said that she would add some more potatoes and water to the stew, and they stayed at the house all night. The neighbors saw one man come out, and another man come out, the next day. But they got it going.

MR. STUBBS: That was the storm that we had the pony engine out of the D-4. I worked part of the night putting that pony engine back in.

MR. NIGHTINGALE: At Bombay Hook we had a lot of deer poachers. A fellow by the name of Richard Rigby was my Assistant then. We went out and we saw these lights. I had the old trusty .45 revolver on my hip, and he had a .30-.30 on his arm, cause we knew these guys were armed. Anyway, we got up close to enough to them, I thought, and I called "Halt!" And what does he do? He takes his rifle and shoots it in the air! Those guys took off. Dick wasn't much of a runner, but in those days, I could. I had a strong flashlight. I was following this guy and I would shine it so that he could see, and I could see. Then I would turn it down so that only I could see. He would run into a limb. And finally he fell down, and I stepped on his rifle and held one foot on his neck. Rigby came chugging up and I said, "Stop, your breathing!" We'd hear, the other fellow crashing

through the brush and then, you couldn't miss the sound the guy had gone through a barbed wire fence, and off of the Refuge. But anyway, we got this guy. I didn't hurt him or anything and I got his rifle. We took him in, and he didn't have any I.D. on him, and he wouldn't tell us who he was. I had a good idea of who he was. I called up the Federal Agent, Russ Gallow, and he came down. He talked to him. He knew him. "Hello Billy! What are you doing?" It was Billy Verdon. He later became a Federal Agent for Fish and Wildlife. He turned himself around. He was a good kid, and smart too. He got that and he called up the State Magistrate because we couldn't take any cases into Federal court for years. At Parker River, they wouldn't take any either.

MR.GOETTEL: Why was that?

MR. NIGHTINGALE: They were misdemeanors, they weren't important enough. They were very important to us however. The Magistrate said, "Come right down." It was like two o'clock in the morning. The Magistrate was a lady. She opened the door and had on a big bathrobe, and a turban over her hair. She saw who was with us and said, "Why Cousin Billy, what are you doing here?" But anyway, we went in and he lost his gun, and lost his license for a year. He also received a fine. It was one of the most stringent fines that they've had in Delaware in years, and years. They'd had market hunters that got lower fines than that. I worked with Game Management Agent Halstead on surveillance of state duck traps. The fellow was taking Canvasbacks; one for you and one for me except that it was "all for me." And he was selling them.

MR. GOETTEL: Was he selling them live, or dead?

MR. NIGHTINGALE: Dead, for the market. On that case, I had to sign some statements as a witness. I also worked with him on surveillance of the State Prison. The Wardens were bringing deer into the prison to be dressed for sale. I kept out of that totally. You know how we're having election problems now? I can remember going by the polls, and there was a fellow there with a pickup truck and some cardboard boxes in the back. He was passing out pints or half-pints of whiskey, just outside of the polls. I have forgotten now whether they were going in or coming out.

MR. STUBBS: Weren't you in on that case that Mose picked up; and I think it was Lee Bailey.

MR. NIGHTINGALE: Three or four fellows came into Parker River Refuge. They had rented a boat on a marina that was just outside of the Refuge boundary. The fellow had warned them that it was a Refuge and that they weren't supposed to hunt. There were signs up too. There were not signs in the river. I suppose you could put them up in the river in a navigable stream. But they were big signs on each side of the river. And they went down and they were hunting down there. We picked them up and took them in and F. Lee Bailey was their lawyer. They were three teachers, I think.

MR. STUBBS: Yeah, three school teachers.

MR. GOETTEL: Was F. Lee Bailey just starting out then?

MR. NIGHTINGALE: I don't know. No, he had a pretty good name, even then.

MR. STUBBS: Did he? That had to have been 1959, or something like that.

MR. NIGHTINGALE: No, it was earlier. I left there before then.

MR. STUBBS: You were commuting back and forth to attend the trial.

MR. NIGHTINGALE: The Federal Prosecutor said that it was the responsibility of a person to know where he is hunting. It is not the responsibility of the landowner to run out and tell him, regardless of whether there were signs or not, it didn't make any difference.

MR. STUBBS: That was their defense. They didn't see the signs.

MR. NIGHTINGALE: The Judge charged the jury, that if in fact they were hunting on the Refuge, which they admitted they were, the jury had to find them guilty. It was not pertinent whether they could see signs or not. And the jury found them, "not guilty." He stood up the jury and ripped them up and down, saying that they would never serve on a Federal jury again.

MR. STUBBS: It made all of the Boston papers. I wish that I had kept a copy of that. They subpoenaed Arthur Miller who was the Regional Supervisor, for the defense. And our attorney was trying to question Arthur Miller, and everything that he would try to question him about, Bailey would hop up and say, "That's immaterial!" The only thing that they could question him on was whether or not there was a sign there. Of course he tried to make the point that he was the Supervisor of many thousands miles of boundary, and that he was in Boston. They would not let him say that, no matter what.

MR. NIGHTINGALE: We had another occasion that we are very lucky in. People were out hunting in the Refuge, just banging away. I mean, anybody could see them for miles around. We jumped in the Federal speedboat. I don't know who was driving, but we bore down on these people. They would move a little, and move the bow. We got almost up to them. You know how in a boat you can chop the throttle and it just squats? We chopped the throttle and nothing happened. So we had to turn the wheel over and we swamped them. They had a little rowboat about that wide, with about that much freeboard. [Demonstrating with his hands] We pulled them onboard, and I gave them a lecture. Oh, I gave them a lecture with my tongue in my cheek. I said, "Well, this time

we'll let you go." But you should have seen their eyes when we were bearing down on them. Their eyes were as big as saucers!

MR. STUBBS: We was out one time late, it was after sundown. And there were two hunters, just at the Plum Island Bridge. We went out and brought them back to the car. They sat in the back seat. And Gordon wrote them up. They were the only people that I ever saw, who thanked him. They actually did. They thanked him because Gordon had a good way about him.

MR. NIGHTINGALE: Well, Billy Verdon, the kid I caught. I brought him home and we had coffee and doughnuts while we were waiting for the Agent. And he thanked me later that I could have been… [Nastier]

MR. STUBBS: These two guys actually thanked Gordon for writing them up.

MR. NIGHTINGALE: There was a spot there where I used to stand with the State Wardens, where the hunters would have to come in off of the marshes. It was the only place they would hunt along the Refuge fence. I had an informal bet with them that anybody that had gone in over their boots would have broken the law. I was right most of the time. But also they'd shoot out there, and it would be pitch black. They were shooting, and they'd come in, and you couldn't tell who was shooting. They would come in, and I'd say, "Was that you just shooting out there a couple of minutes ago?" The answer would be "Oh yeah." It hurt me to see them [get in trouble]. I tried to get them to give them warnings because it was just shear ignorance. I was with a Federal Warden once he was an old, old timer. His name was Orrin Steele. He had been dead a long time. He died shortly after. We were out on Pine Island fence again, and a fellow came in with a Seagull. He asked, "What kind of goose is this, with a pick in the bill?" Orrin said, "Oh, that's a Snow goose. Now you take him home and you pluck him and bake him." He didn't write him up or anything.

MR. STUBBS: Did you know that Orrin Steele came from Blyfield? [Place name not clear]

MR. NIGHTINGALE: No!

MR. STUBBS: I was talking to a guy yesterday who knew him.

MR. GOETTEL: You probably never had any law enforcement training then did you?

MR. NIGHTINGALE: Oh yeah, sure. We would have meetings and get together. You shouldn't ask me these questions. We had a meeting at Moosehorn Refuge for law enforcement training for Refuge personnel. All the Agents I think, in Region 5 attended it. There are two stories that really came out of it. The first that there was a Maintenance

man from Montezuma or Oak Orchard, I am not sure which one it was. His name was Odman Olson. He was a hard worked and everything, but he was an odd one. We were having meetings, and he disappeared. He got tired or bored or something. The next thing we know, we were through with the meetings and out on the Refuge. I think we were going out looking for deer tracks or something. The border patrol came in with a person by the scruff of his neck. "This guy says he works for the Fish and Wildlife Service, do you know him?" His eyes were as big as saucers. That was one thing. The other thing was that I got a call from the local police. They had one of our people at the hotel that was causing a disturbance. They wanted to know if I would vouch for him. Well, it was an Agent with curly blonde hair, and he was stocky. Anyway, the meetings were over, and they were going room to room, playing poker and maybe drinking. But the hotel had a bearskin on the wall, and he put it on and went around from door to door roaring like a bear!

MR. STUBBS: We used to have more fun.

MR. NIGHTINGALE: I went up to Moosehorn in the later part of July or August. Refuges are run by money and people, people first and money second. But I got up there and had a lot of people and decided that I didn't have enough money to go through the end of the year. I had to wind up the Staff, and I think we had maybe ten or twelve temporaries. I had to fire them all. I was very sorry, but there just wasn't enough money. I talked to the Clerk that was there, Stan McConvey. He had an encyclopedic mind. He could tell you a purchase order number from five years ago, and who it was and what they paid. He said, "Well, this is nothing. Every June, we go around, and to keep one vehicle going, we siphon gas out of all of the rest of the vehicles." Dave Hickcock was a doer, and a wonderful person. But he made a big show. He had eight or nine bulldozers, four draglines, eight or nine jeeps, a sawmill, a planer mill, you name it. He picked it up surplus, but they still cost money to keep running.

MR. GOETTEL: Tommy was saying that Dave Hickcock might have come up with the first Service uniform. He did, huh?

MR. NIGHTINGALE: Do you want to know the whole story?

MR. GOETTEL: Yeah.

MR. NIGHTINGALE: No you don't!

MR. GOETTEL: Sure.

MR. NIGHTINGALE: O.K. [Mrs. Nightingale comes home, tape stops and restarts] We were at uniforms for the Fish and Wildlife Service. I believe that was originally instigated by Dave Hickcock. Though the Federal Wardens had had a uniform for years

and years. It was a gray uniform. Dave worked with Feckheimers, I believe, in developing a forest green uniform and patch. I think that for the patch he was working with a different company. I don't know the name of it. Dave wrote to the various Managers to see who might be amenable to enter into it with him. I guess he got a pretty favorable response. Because he either had, or got some samples and sent those out, and took orders, and sent for them. Most of the Refuges in Region 5, and many of those outside Region 5 bought them on their own, with the rationale that they had to buy clothes anyway. And the patches weren't official, but they were worn with pride. The story goes, I can't prove it one way or the other, but Dave had sold some worn out bulldozer tracks for scrap, which they were. And used the money to finance the uniforms. When he received the money from the Managers, he reimbursed the Fish and Wildlife Service for the sale of the scrap.

MR. GOETTEL: He was an honest guy.

MR. NIGHTINGALE: Yeah. Many Refuge Managers that I have known have cut corners. But with very few exceptions, they were all very honest in what they did. In what they did, they did for the good of the whole. I had one serious investigation where they went through my bank accounts, they went through the tires on my car, the batteries.
Tommy Stubbs was building his house on his own, in his own time then. They went to the bank, and to all of the merchants, everything that you can possibly think of. What it boiled down to was, that I received a reprimand for running monthly charge accounts. The accounts were right. And they were right in that I was wrong to do it. But within two weeks, it was official policy to run monthly charge accounts! So, the rational was that it was not for me to decide what made sense. I was to follow the party line. It didn't bother me, but the person who blew the whistle said that I was feathering my own nest. And it later turned out that he was doing what we didn't. Afterwards, they transferred him to another Refuge and he falsified records, made expense accounts when he wasn't traveling and so forth. They were going to discharge him, and with political pressure from Margaret Chase-Smith in Maine they put him back on. Then within a year, he was doing the same thing again. That was Stephen Gendall. In all fairness to him, he had a military disability that I suspect may have affected his judgment. But we were never able to find out what the disability was. It was privileged information.

MR. GOETTEL: Is Dave Hickcock still alive?

MR. NIGHTINGALE: I don't know.

MR. GOETTEL: See? I have never seen that green uniform. You don't have an old one of the old original uniforms do you?

MR. NIGHTINGALE: I've got some pictures, of them I think. I may have a patch. I've some of the old brown uniforms, still hanging up in the closet.

MR. GOETTEL: Do you really?

MR. NIGHTINGALE: Yeah. I really liked the cruiser coat, except that they have all shrunk! I showed you the sod cutter. One of the things we got, that I thought was one of the first was that we had an OC-3, a crawler tractor. The tracks are maybe eight feet wide. You put oak cleats on those and you can go anywhere on the marsh a man can walk. But if you were to seat it, you were in big trouble, because you've got that big thing down there. One of the things I found very interesting at Parker River was the association with the Coast Guard. They were worse than the Refuge Managers. They were changing all of the time. The Chief was changing constantly. They never really got to know the area. I remember one time, they came down and asked us to guide them down to the end of Parker River. The road wasn't good then. We went down, but we weren't going fast enough, so they started going straight and the last thing we saw was the headlights going straight up and straight down. They mashed the whole front of the Jeep. One time, they had a distress call and I was with them to show them where the channel was. And we got out there and the tide was going out and the storm was coming in. All of a sudden you would see bare sand. The water there was maybe thirty or forty feet deep. We turned around and came back. Another time, they had duck hunters stranded on the marsh. You know, all you've got to do is wait for the tide to go out. But there was a hurricane, or something of that sort. They wanted to go down, and I went down with them in forty footer, and they couldn't get in over the bar. We waited and road a wave in. They launched a small boat and got the hunters out. But it was two weeks before they could get their boat back out. I was talking about the "spite" house; one morning I got up in the morning, it was warm and we had the windows open. I heard this "skitch-skitch, skitch-skitch" sound. I looked out the window, and there is the Chief sitting on my back porch scuffing his feet, trying to wake me up but not too loudly. I went down and he had had a little mishap. A beach buggy had gone down and gotten stuck, and the tide was coming in. They sent the Jeep down, but it had gotten bogged down. It just had the military treads on it, not the sand type. They sent a six-wheel drive, with the duals in back, and it got stuck. That was stuck into a bank, and they couldn't back up and they couldn't go ahead. Tommy Stubbs came down, and we brought the dozer down and pulled them all up onto the high ground. One of the challenges there was that the town didn't plow out the summer colony on Plum Island until the last thing. People wanted to get to the store for milk and so forth. So we had a plow, and we had to plow out the Maintenance men. It was a small plow and unless we kept the road plowed, it would build up so high that we couldn't plow it. We'd go down, and if the wind was from the east, we'd plow towards the west, a vice-versa. We'd go down maybe once an hour or so and we'd plow out the town road as we went. We'd go up to the Coast Guard, we helped them out, and they helped us out. Then we'd go up

and eat at the Coast Guard. When we were plowing, they would know, and they'd have a big ham or something for us to eat. That worked out very well.

We put up a radio tower. We put one up at Parker River. It was about maybe fifty or sixty feet. The fire department came down and cooperated. They helped us put the antenna on top. Stubbs volunteered to go up. It must have been caught on the edge of the tower a little bit. There's a triangle shaped tower, about a foot square. It wasn't a very big one. Tommy was up there and all of a sudden the ladder lurched and dropped a couple of feet. Tom must have turned white. But it was just taking up the slack. One day I was out there, and a mother came in and said, "My boy is up the radio tower." There was a kid about four or five years old, half way up the tower! It was simple enough to climb, but you don't think about that. So we built a plywood [fence] that we could lock. Another thing at Bombay Hook, we had a two hundred and four foot radio tower. It had to have a light on it because it was right next to the Dover Air Force Base. The light burned out, so we hired a rigger to come and put a new light in. He came from a dinner party or something, and brought his work belt. But he didn't bring any tools. I wasn't sure what tools he would need up there. I gave my son Steve the keys to the shop and asked him to bring over some tools in case the repairman needed them. The guy went up, and I could hear my son talking to my wife. There were a lot of people watching what was going on. He told my wife, "You don't need any tools. All you do is take of f the screen and unscrew the bulb and put a new one in." The little devil had been up to the top of that tower! That tower was a job to climb. There was no place to climb for the first ten feet, then there were rungs there on up.

Bombay Hook started the public hunting of geese because there were so many of them there. When we got Prime Hook, we started the public hunting of ducks. I sent in a suggestion to not use lead shot on the Refuge. It was sent back to me. In fact, I sent in twice. When we first started it for goose hunting, it was first come, first served. And they would line up a day ahead of time. So that got to be a mess, and then it got to a lottery.

MR. GOETTEL: Did you document the lead poisoning down there?

MR. NIGHTINGALE: Yeah. And it wasn't just that Refuge. It was everywhere. But there hadn't been any hunting there since the 1930s and this was in the 1950s. Why dump more lead shot on the land? Then, they had kids hunting in the pools, the worst place to get concentrations of lead shot. Then we went to the lottery and there was a lot of newspaper publicity. I've got books and books of newspaper clippings; one of the things was hunting. The other thing was mosquitoes. Bombay Hook produces a lot of mosquitoes, no ifs, ands or buts about it.

The same boat that Stubbs had, that we used; it was one that we bought. It was a flat, fiberglass boat and it had a knife prow. I was coming out from the bank of the Parker

River with Ed Chandler, another Assistant and the tide was going out and the wind was coming in. There were pretty good-sized waves, and I hit it at maybe half throttle. I was expecting it to lift. It didn't lift one inch. It went straight into the wave. About four inches of water came over the bow, into the boat. Of course, I chopped the throttle headed upstream. We took the plug out and siphoned it out, and then we went out, slowly. But we got rid of that boat, I'll tell you that.

I started the Wood duck boxes in 1945 or so with the State of Massachusetts, putting them on poles and battery boxes and stuff. One of the things that I found that was odd was that during the wintertime, the boxes in the woods would sometimes have eight and nine squirrels in them. They would be all huddled up in there. I never knew that happened.

MR. GOETTEL: What did you say about bailing boxes?

MR. NIGHTINGALE: We tried experiments with two poles with two by fours between them. We put four boxes on each side. It was a great place to collect eggs but there was not much otherwise. Sometimes you'd have twenty eggs in one box, and three in another, and thirty in another.

We've pretty much covered a lot of it. I've got some of the publications on Black Duck cloacal [sic] sex, age characters and those.

Here's another odd thing. I received a letter of reprimand for impeded the destruction of that house from the Region office. The newspapers came out with big blurbs on what a great job I had done in helping to save it. It was leased on the long-term basis to the Delaware State historical organization. I received a phone call with instructions to rip up the letter of reprimand that I had received, and then got a letter of commendation. I have always been a firm believer that the world doesn't turn on ducks alone. There are so many values that you have with the land.

MR. GOETTEL: I was a Refuge Manager at Eastern Neck and they had a big old brick farmhouse there. You've probably been there. I was telling somebody this story the other day, but back in the early sixties, they bulldozed this beautiful old brick farmhouse from the 1700s. And when the Fish and Wildlife Service bought the island, we bulldozed that into the Bay, literally. And they set up the office in this little, really cheaply built ranch-style house, which should have been torn down. It wasn't worth two cents. It's funny some of the things you do.

MR. NIGHTINGALE: When I was gone on vacation, that same Regional Supervisor who sent me the letter of reprimand went down with Tom Stubbs. There was an old house on Stage Island that had secret compartments to hide in. Supposedly, I never tried it, but there were supposedly tunnels that went out to the water for rum running. It went

back to the 1700s. The Historical Society asked to keep it and so forth, but the Fish and Wildlife Service got rid of it.

Well, I think I've just about run out. And besides, I think I have to "make a trip to see my Aunt."

MR. GOETTEL: Oh do you? [Mr. Goettel gets the joke, and] Oh, that one.

[Tape stops and begins]

MR. NIGHTINGALE: …I say, "Fine, that's good. Why don't you want it?" You don't look very well in Congress if you're just saying that we don't want it because the Refuge Manager doesn't want. Why don't you want it, and document it? We went round and round and it worked out pretty well, except that it was so complicated.

If you've got a minute, I'll take you downstairs and show you what I've got for narrative reports. I've probably got twenty years of narrative reports, and a lot of these evaluations and studies and whatnot. The most fun was when you had mud between your toes. The higher up you go you think you want to control more of your destiny, the state and national destiny. So you take a bigger job, but you are tied down to the desk more and more. You cease being a wildlife manager and become a people manager, and budgeter.

MR. GOETTEL: That's for sure.

MR. NIGHTINGALE: There are too few people who combine the three things well; the people management, the wildlife management and budgeting. They are all an integral part. And of course planning, but the Fish and Wildlife Service has plenty of planners. We have planned, and re-planned and master-planned scores of times.

MR. GOETTEL: I don't know if you have heard of it, but now we've got Comprehensive Conservation Plans. That's the latest thing. We've got to get it done in fifteen years. It has to be done by 2015, I guess.

MR. NIGHTINGALE: I can remember when I first went to work for the Service in River Basins, managing on watershed basins. It ran into a tremendous amount of trouble and still does I guess, when you come right down to habitat preservation and planning. Then I personal bones to rip; this house, when we got the mortgage, we had to have flood insurance. The map showed us out in the middle of the salt marsh. The road that you drove in on is in the salt marsh. The houses up the street that are lower than this aren't in the flood plain. I got in touch with the Federal people, and they said, "Oh, that's easy. All you've got to do is get a certified engineer, go to a USGS benchmark, have it surveyed and approved, and tested and plans drawn up and sent it. Maybe in two or three years,

we can have it fixed. And it will cost you between four and six thousand dollars." I had charge of the crew that was doing the stereoptic and viewing and drawing the wetlands boundaries. That was John Arigon and that group. Ralph Tynner was on the Staff. I have been very fortunate with excellent staffs. I had Tiner, Bartlett and excellent people. I had Beth Surgeons who headed up the AEDP aspect of habitat preservation. I got into Animal Damage Control reports. It was automatic data processing. The trappers were going to fill in the forms, and stuff and send it in. They would list how many Coyotes, and how many trap lines. It turns out that a high percentage of the trappers down through the southwest couldn't read and write, or couldn't read and write English. So that fell through.

The "old, get-go" still works. Garbage in and garbage out.

MR. GOETTEL: Oh boy, that's for sure. You said earlier about going to the programmatic set up in Washington. And that it was to break the backbone of the different programs?

MR. NIGHTINGALE: Yeah, the people were privately very frank. The Chief of Refuges in Washington was a power unto himself. They would get in touch with the Committees and back and forth. There was Appropriations and Law Enforcement, and Fish Hatcheries, definitely, with Byrd and whatnot. It was fairly definite that that was being done and I am afraid that some of the baby got thrown out with the bath water.

MR. GOETTEL: Did Greenwalt do that?

MR. NIGHTINGALE: No. That had started with Smith.

MR. GOETTEL: Was that Burt Smith?

MR. NIGHTINGALE: No, it was the Director; I think it was Smith, who preceded Greenwalt.

MR. GOETTEL: That was before my time.

MR. NIGHTINGALE: It was well launched. And Vic Schmidt was in on it. It was ironic that I was one of those who went down to interview at Tuckahoe Wildlife Management Area in New Jersey, to come to work for the Federal government. And later, he was instrumental in getting me out in Region 2. I was supposed to go there, but they had trouble because I didn't have a degree. They had to go to OMB, and I had taken enough courses and had enough experience, so they got what amounted to a waiver to promote me. It was the same when I went into Washington as a "14".

MR. GOETTEL: Where did you go to school? You said you went for two years.

MR. NIGHTINGALE: I went for a year at the University of New Hampshire. My father paid for it. I passed all of my papers in during the last week of school. Some of them were marked down thirty percent for being late, and whatnot. Anyway, I fouled up. So I went out and worked for a year. I found that I really didn't care for working at the gold assay lab at American Optical Company. It was a fairly decent job, but once you learned it, it was repetitious. So I went back to the University of Maine and got in easily because of the war. They were short of students. I was on the Dean's List and took extra courses and had a nervous collapse. I was working in the forest nursery, and the sawfly lab and the fisheries lab. I was also working in the place were I boarded for room and board. I had more money when I left school, than when I went in after paying my tuition and all of that stuff. Then I went to work with the State, as I said, as a laborer. I had some rough times. When I was in High School, I quit for a year. When I reached my puberty, my stammering started very badly. I couldn't say my name, or recite in class. Actually, people were most considerate. I have no complaints, but I still felt that people were looking at me and laughing at me. So, I left school, and here I am. Life just keeps getting better, and better, and better.

MR. GOETTEL: That's great! You've got a beautiful place here.

MR. NIGHTINGALE: My wife and I were talking and we don't have a house; we have a home. It may not suit a lot of people, but to us, it's home. It's cozy and we have things that we like around us.

MR. GOETTEL: Oh, it's wonderful!

MR. NIGHTINGALE: Sitting here, having my breakfast, I had Titmice and Chickadees and House Finches and Gold Finches and Red Bellies Woodpeckers, Flickers, Hairy and Downy Woodpeckers, Starlings and Blue Jays, Cardinals, Mockingbirds, and a Wren that comes around. He goes up there and gets the suet of all things.

MR. GOETTEL: Is that a Marsh Wren or a House Wren?

MR. NIGHTINGALE: I'm not sure. I didn't see it close. You can tell from where the eye stripe is. I've got a book here, but I need to get a pair of binoculars. I get out the telescope now, a little later when the grass has died down in the marsh, or matted down, we'll see a lot of ducks and geese and things out there. There goes a Red tail. We have Marsh Hawks, and Cooper's and/or Sharp shin. Sometimes we have small ones. I am sure that they are Sharp shins. Sometimes they are in the middle and I'm not sure. Once in a while we get a big, old one. I am sure that that is a female Cooper's hawk. They go whizzing down through here, shaking up the birds. We get an occasional Red Fox and goes by, and the occasional Coyote. And a deer comes by once in a while.

MR. GOETTEL: Are there any Moose down this way yet, or bear or anything?

MR. NIGHTINGALE: Oh no. You mentioned bear. Up at Moosehorn we used to go and get apples to make apple jelly. We'd get big piles of apples and put them on our lawn and cover them with a blanket. During the winter we've throw them out so that the deer would come up and we could see them. We went to one place, and there were these piles of applesauce. They hadn't changed color. When you cut an apple, they turn brown but these had been there, and I felt them and they were cold. Then I looked at the trees, and they were all clawed up. Bears had been eating them. I don't know if they had been regurgitating or if they were actually going "foosh" through, but there was some acid or something that was preserving the apples.

MR. GOETTEL: I have seen that too. I've always thought that it just goes shooting right through, but I don't know. [The bear's digestive tract]

MR. NIGHTINGALE: When we first got there, my wife was shaking me, "There's a Bear outside. There's a Bear outside!" [Tape ends]